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ABSTRACT

Illinois is considering various approaches to school/business partnerships that will alleviate some of the problems facing America today, especially the need for an educated, trainable, and flexible workforce able to satisfy the demands of a radically altered economic environment. Widespread functional illiteracy, retraining needs, and school-to-work transition are among the issues to which private industry can make important contributions. The paper offers the following policy options for consideration: (1) curriculum reform to reflect modern private sector technologies, practices, and standards; (2) expanded work-study programs wherein students receive both academic credit and competitive wages; (3) career exploration; (4) school/business compacts with incentives and measurable goals; (5) business-run classes; (6) business-created schools; (7) adopt-a-school programs wherein businesses make financial commitments; (8) attracting and retaining good teachers by guaranteeing two or three months of summer employment with local businesses and industries; (9) providing teachers by bringing experts and specialists into schools at business' expense; (10) business-run teacher institutes; (11) business internship for teachers; (12) evaluating and providing counsel on current school programs and practices; and (13) state action and planning to develop viable school/business partnerships. (LHW)

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Working Paper 3

School/Business Partnerships

A Joint Project of
CHICAGO UNITED and
THE ROOSEVELT CENTER FOR
AMERICAN POLICY STUDIES

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THE ILLINOIS PROJECT FOR SCHOOL REFORM

Preface

This paper is intended as a workbook for discussion. It deals with a major issue confronting public education in Illinois and in the nation. It is written with the belief that educators and non-educators can, when the issues are presented, engage in a democratic process of discussion which can lead to enlightened decisions.

We have attempted to do essentially four things in the discussion of this issue. First, we state the problem facing public education as succinctly as we can. Second, we try to present some hard evidence that the problem does indeed merit our attention. Information from both state and national studies is used to substantiate the scope and depth of the problem at hand. Third, we give a brief overview of how the problem is being addressed elsewhere in the nation to give some sense of what others are attempting. Those approaches may or may not be appropriate for our own state. And finally, we have attempted to lay out, in the most broad strokes, some possible policy options we might consider in dealing with the issue.

Hopefully these choices will stimulate discussion and raise further questions. These policy options are not meant to be all-inclusive or complete. There may well be other and better approaches to take. The important thing is that this paper be the starting point for discussion of a complex issue.

Making public policy is no easy task. Dozens of moral, political, economic, historical and social variables interact to define what is or is not possible. Educational policy is even more complex because of the large numbers of people and interests involved. Yet as difficult as it is, our times call for serious discussion by serious people of the quality and future of America's schools.

Over a century ago, our nation made a historic and unique commitment to the concept of education for all of our people. Our goal must now be to keep open those doors of educational opportunity and to do our utmost to insure that once a child enters that door, the quality of the education received is nothing less than excellent.

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Introduction

This working paper deals with the issue of public school/business partnerships. It is part of a larger inquiry into the relationship between schools and the 78 percent of the adult population without children in the public schools; and between public schools and other community institutions, such as museums, hospitals, parks and recreation facilities, libraries, civic and social organizations and governmental agencies. These issues are examined in other working papers in the series.

These relationships are becoming increasingly important because educational research suggests that:

- The education of young people cannot be left to the schools alone;
- Educational services are delivered most effectively when education is practiced as a joint enterprise, involving active parents, citizens, businesses and other community resources;
- Our expectations for the schools and the schools' needs require, as never before, the pooling and application of outside resources — without which neither our hopes nor the schools' needs can possibly be met; and
- Significant educational reform will elude us until and unless new partnerships are created and old ones are strengthened.

This paper makes the case for stronger ties between the public schools and the business community. It outlines a number of options for forging such partnerships. Local initiative is needed in every instance. The state, for its part, should not only become involved in stimulating these linkages, but should consider creating incentives — including possible tax breaks, adjustments in teacher certification requirements and public recognition programs — to facilitate linkages. In the end, enlightened and mutual self-interests alone may be a sufficient inducement for establishing school/business relationships.

How To Use This Booklet

The approaches to school/business partnerships being considered in other parts of the country are also being discussed in Illinois. They are thoughtful and promising alternatives and should form the basis for our choices here, as well.

As you consider the possible options, you should address the following questions in evaluating policies which will result in closer and more productive business/educational ties:

1. Do the policy options insure a higher level of quality for students?
2. What are the political implications of choosing some options and not others?
3. What will the options cost, if adopted?
4. How will parents and the community react to the options considered?
5. Will the options have teacher support?

As you discuss these and other questions it will be helpful to write out the points made by your group. By the time you have listed some points in each question, you will have a good overview of the educational, political and fiscal dimensions your recommendations are taking.

The Illinois Project for School Reform will be bringing together local citizens' councils such as yours to regional meetings from mid-October through December. Hopefully, by that time, you will have discussed the potential options on school/business partnerships and will be ready to submit your thoughts, in writing, to your fellow citizens throughout Illinois. These combined council suggestions will form the basis for our "school/business partnership plank" in our legislative reform package platform. So in summary:

1. Read the paper.
2. Record your comments, ideas and suggestions.
3. Attempt to reach a consensus with your group as to what specific recommendations you will forward to the regional meetings.

I
School/Business Partnerships: Defining the Problem

In approaching the issue of school/business partnerships, it may be helpful to look once again at the verdict rendered by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. In three widely quoted passages from its report, *A Nation At Risk*, the Commission succinctly summarized our predicament.

> Our nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world. [The] educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future. . . .
>
> If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war.
>
> History is not kind to idlers. . . . The world is indeed one global village. We live among determined, well-educated and strongly motivated competitors. We compete with them for international standing and markets, not only with products but also with the ideas of our laboratories and neighborhood workshops. America's position in the world may once have been reasonably secure with only a few exceptionally well-trained men and women. It is no longer.

As we examine the problem of how to develop more effective school/business partnerships, it is important to keep in mind these questions:

1. How well has the United States' economic environment changed in the last 10 to 15 years and what are the implications — current and future — for the job market, economic growth and America's competitive position in the world?
2. How well have the public schools adjusted to this changing economic environment and how well are they preparing students, whether work or college bound, to meet these new and emerging economic realities?

II
Evidence of the Problem

Pat Choate, an economics analyst, has warned, as so many others have, that, "American workers are poorly prepared to adapt to . . . shifting economic circumstances. Their academic skills are deficient and their functional skills are fast becoming obsolete. Most important, America's educational and training institutions are inadequately prepared to assist these workers to meet the difficult challenges that lie ahead." What exactly are these shifting circumstances?

Growth of the American workforce is slowing dramatically. The post World War II baby boom is maturing and many older workers are choosing early retirement. While the workforce grew by over 20 million in the 1970s, it will expand by less than 15 million workers in the 1980s and by only 10 million in the 1990s. Today's workers, therefore, will constitute over 80 percent of the workforce at the turn of the century, and employers will be forced to draw primarily from today's pool of workers to fill pressing jobs.

If the nation wants to remain competitive and hopes for growth in productivity, our workforce, in the next 20 years, had better be the best educated, the most trainable and the most agile we have ever produced. The public schools will have to be ready to contribute to the creation of a flexible workforce.

The U.S. economy is no longer based primarily on agriculture and manufacturing. We have entered an era where more and more jobs are related to the provision of services and information. Illinois, as a microcosm of the nation, is going through this transformation and the tide is not likely to be stemmed.

In its 1995 projections, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that 75 percent of all new jobs created between 1982 and 1985 will be linked with some type of service production. Service industries include transportation, communications, public utilities, trade, finance, insurance, real estate and government.

The trend is clear. Of the 20 fastest growing occupations, 16 are services-related, 3 are goods producing, and 1 is related to mining. In contrast, the list of the 20 fastest declining industries is dominated by manufacturing. Manufacturing added 3.8 million jobs between 1958 and 1968. From 1968-1978 manufacturing industries gained only 600,000 jobs and between 1979-1982, manufacturing lost more than 2.8 million jobs.

Service industries, on the other hand, added 3.7 million jobs between 1979-1982 — and since the recovery began in 1983 another 1.6 million.

It is obvious that the changing nature of the economy has implications for the public schools, many of which are organized and operate on the basis of an industrial model whose time has passed.

Technology is hastening the transition from a manufacturing-based economy to a service/information-based economy. It is — as it has always been — both a blessing and a curse. Not only did advancing technology, for example, make possible the transition from an agricultural to a manufacturing dependent economy, it also made American agricultural production the envy of the world — but with only a fraction of its former workforce.

So again technology is generating both gains and pains. It keeps us competitive; it increases productivity; it enhances quality; and it reduces costs. But new technology also threatens hundreds of thousands of workers whose jobs will be irretrievably lost because of automation or because of the introduction of cheaper high quality products from abroad.

"Displaced workers" — workers who were neither fired nor quit — are the most obvious cost to an economy which is relying more on services and information jobs and less on manufacturing jobs. In 1982 and 1983 almost 11 percent of the labor force experienced such displacement. By 1985 it is projected another 11 million workers will be permanently laid off, that is, displaced.

Twenty years ago, trade and investment constituted less than 13 percent of the U.S. GNP; last year, it constituted over 25 percent. Seventy percent of our goods-producing industries are now subject to foreign competition, but in 1963 only 20 percent of our goods faced such competition.

Seriously threatened are America's steel, automobile, machine tools and apparel industries. Our foreign competitors are now postured to challenge us on new fronts — biotechnology, robotics, computers, telecommunications, high performance polymeric materials, aircraft — and they are likely in some cases "to beat" us and capture markets we once dominated.

These facts illustrate the problems we face as we attempt to maintain a position of strength in a competitive international economy.

- 23 million Americans are functionally illiterate and 2.3 million people are joining that pool annually.
- 46 million Americans are considered only marginally literate.
- As much as 75 percent of the unemployed workforce lacks the necessary communications and problem-solving skills to be easily trained for jobs, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.
- On a scale of 200 to 800, the average score for students taking aptitude tests in mathematics declined from 502 in 1963 to 466 in 1981 and on the verbal test from 478 to 424. Both the number and proportion of students showing superior achievement (scores of 650 or higher) have dramatically declined.

- 20 to 30 percent of American high school students either mark time or drop out.
- Many 17-year-olds do not possess higher order skills: nearly 40 percent cannot draw inferences from written materials; only one-fifth can write a persuasive essay; only one-third can solve a mathematics problem requiring several steps.
- Between 1975 and 1980, remedial mathematics courses in public 4-year colleges increased by 72 percent.
- Businesses and the military are spending millions of dollars on costly remedial education and training programs in basic skills like reading, writing, spelling and computation.

Workspace:

For your notes, opinions, ideas and suggestions.

III
Some Current Proposals

Both education and business people believe that the solution to some of these problems lies in the development of task forces and other partnerships comprised of leaders from business, industry, politics, labor and education. Support has taken the form of direct contributions from foundations and corporations to individual school/business partnerships. The examples presented here indicate successful endeavors which were designed to address the same issues that now concern us in Illinois.

A) Decreasing Illiteracy

Several corporations, including General Motors and Dow Chemical, have undertaken reading improvement programs for employees and local public school students. The New York Business Council for Effective Literacy, Inc. was founded in early 1984 as a private foundation to foster greater corporate involvement in combatting functional literacy. Its mission is to fund research in the area of 21st century educational needs and to refer volunteers and potential students to appropriate remedial programs.

B) Private Industry Contributions to Education

The Private Industry Council of New York City (PIC) was formed by business executives and city officials in 1979 to address the mismatch between the skills demanded in the labor market and those possessed by the currently unemployed. The PIC has developed training programs which combine classroom training and individually tailored on-the-job training programs. In addition, they provide programs for adults, school-to-work transitions and the development of new employment opportunities.

The Aetna Life Insurance Company, through its Institute for Corporate Education, and the Hartford School/Business Collaborative Study have developed programs which provide business resources for the improvement of educational programs.

Aetna, motivated internally by its need for a highly skilled labor force, its desire to carry out affirmative action goals and its need to enable managers to interact more effectively with a heterogeneous work force, focused on increasing the educational capacity of the community and supporting educational and training programs for non-employees and prospective employees.

The goal of the Hartford School/Business Collaborative Study is to increase levels of basic education in the community and to stimulate and coordinate activities between the business community and the school system, for the purpose of helping youth make an effective transition through the educational system into the

world of work. The program's advisory committee is made up of employers in the area, school principals and members of community organizations.

Other ways in which corporations have made donations to the school systems are in the form of equipment. Apple Corporation has made numerous donations of personal computers for educational purposes. In return, the company receives tax benefits as well as the benefit of a technically educated workforce.

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IV
Some Policy Options To Consider

Option A — Curriculum Reform

The development of school/business partnerships to modify the curriculum (both what is taught and how it is taught) to reflect more accurately modern private sector technologies, practices and standards is one aspect of curriculum reform.

In communities where such efforts are underway, businesses will often join with local educators to determine local employment requirements (current and projected), shape subject offerings which reflect those needs and then enlist the funds, equipment, materials and on-loan experts to implement the program.

In Boston, for example, industry is heavily involved in the school system's occupational resources center. Area employers have largely written the curriculum for technical occupations. Digital Equipment Corporation and Apple Computer have contributed equipment and provided a full-time staff consultant to the center.

Citibank and New York City's Martin Luther King High School, to cite another example, have jointly created a three-year "office of the future" curriculum. The program has three thrusts. First, it has updated the curriculum and introduced teaching methods to prepare students for emerging business technologies. Second, the program involves intensive business skills training, starting in tenth grade and continuing through graduation. And third, the program provides students with bank-work experience to encourage completion of school and the transition from school into well-paid business careers.

Option B — Work-Study

There should be expanded opportunities for students to work part-time for academic credit and competitive wages during their junior and senior years. Such a program requires flexible school schedules which enable students to attend required classes and fulfill their academic requirements on a shortened schedule.

The schools recruit business participants, pre-screen students, make referrals and ensure students are supervised. Such programs — and many exist — tend to reduce dropout rates, because employment is conditional upon remaining in school. Research is fairly conclusive: non-college bound students who have worked during their high school years make a smoother transition from school to work.

Option C — Career Exploration

Local businesses, not-for-profit intermediaries and the schools

should develop a variety of career exploration experiences for students. Where such programs exist, they are diverse and include career centers and clubs, structured work experiences and pre-employment training. This is a larger job than schools can normally handle alone, if it is to be done well. It involves assessing students' skills and interests and providing job readiness training; developing job application and interviewing skills; and providing practical tips on personal dress, speech and behavior.

Option D — School/Business Compacts — Incentives and Measurable Goals

The Boston Compact, consumated in 1982, represents a remarkable bargain between schools and businesses — and may suggest a model for some Illinois communities. The Boston schools, in a written agreement, agreed during each year of the Compact's life that (1) the dropout rate would be reduced (a 5 percent increase per year in the number of students graduating); (2) by 1986, all graduates would demonstrate the reading and math skills necessary for employment through the achievement of minimum competency standards; and (3) the placement of graduates in jobs or in opportunities for further education would be increased five percent annually.

The business community, on the other hand, agreed to recruit 200 companies to participate in the graduate hiring program, to place 400 qualified graduates in jobs by September 1983 and to provide summer jobs for 1,000 students.

Both sides committed themselves to measurable goals and both then mobilized for the effort. A year later, *The Boston Globe* summarized the results in an editorial.

> With a minimum of fanfare, the Boston Compact has passed its first anniversary with honors. . . . A little over a year later, the goals set for the business community have been more than realized: The target was to get 200 individual businesses to agree to the compact: 273 have. The goal was to hire in the first year 400 graduates of Boston high schools in permanent jobs; 407 were hired at an average hourly salary of $4.34.
>
> The significance of these accomplishments is not merely in the numbers, but in the message they send to students, particularly students of poor families. They signal clearly that regular attendance and satisfactory achievement can earn a tangible reward.

Last October, the Compact was expanded to include over 20 Boston-area colleges and universities. The higher education community agreed to increase by 25 percent, by 1989, the number of entering ninth graders to be admitted to area colleges. Furthermore, the higher education consortium agreed to help reform the public

schools' core curriculum and to develop and support a host of other programs to reduce the system's dropout rate (47 percent of Boston's entering ninth graders never graduate).

It is still too early to render any final verdicts, but the Boston Compact illustrates the kind of boldness and imagination we may need to see in school/business partnerships.

Option E — Business-Run Classes

To enable school systems to offer students more comprehensive vocational and career education programs, local businesses and industries should actually organize and sponsor classes for students. Many companies can provide sites and underwrite the costs for instructors, curriculum design, facilities, maintenance and equipment. All aspects of such a program, of course, must be jointly designed and implemented by local school and company officials. For students, the benefits are obvious: they receive hands-on training on modern equipment normally not available to the schools. In addition, they receive both academic credit and a wage for the work-study program.

Option F — Business-Created Schools

There are communities where business and school officials, having perceived a serious need, have collaborated in planning and developing new or alternative schools. In such cases, businesses help plan and update curriculum, enlist corporate support, line-up co-op jobs for students and identify and incorporate private sector resources to enhance career skills. Such schools generally have a dual mission: to prepare graduates for either current and long term local labor market needs or for higher education and advanced vocational programs.

In 1975, the New York City Board of Education and the business community (The Downtown Lower Manhattan Association) created such a magnet school — the Murray Bergtraum High School for Business Careers. The school, which now services 2,500 students, offers a rigorous educational option related to the real life needs and opportunities of business.

Together, chief executive officers, managers and school personnel shaped a curriculum emphasizing accounting, marketing, legal studies, computer science and secretarial studies. The Association intervened successfully with state educational officials to permit greater use of non-accredited "teaching" personnel.

Is it successful? The school experiences a 1 percent per year dropout rate. There are 8,000 applicants for 600 openings. Eighty percent of the graduates end up attending college, with the companies often paying the tuition.

Option G — Adopt-a-School

Adopting a school requires a business to volunteer the kind of

human resources needed to enrich a school's general offerings and to improve its career education program. While adoption can mean different things, it generally involves one or more of the following: contributions of equipment and materials; providing scholarships; assigning business managers to oversee programs; and release-time for employee volunteers — all of which represent financial commitments.

The adopt-a-school program in Los Angeles involves more than 90 companies and 100 schools. In its work with two schools, ARCO provides several hundred release-time employees who provide tutoring services, conduct mini-courses and supervise company-funded field trips to business locations and cultural sites. In addition, the company has hired a full-time educator to expand employee-volunteer activities and pays for coordinators in both its adopted schools.

Option H — Attracting and Retaining Good Teachers

Local businesses should be prepared to pool resources when necessary to provide pay differentials for teachers who are in short supply, such as science and mathematics teachers. Such arrangements need to be worked out carefully with school authorities, including teacher associations, to ensure that locally negotiated school management-teacher agreements will accommodate such differentials.

An alternative way of attracting and retaining teachers in subject areas in which they are in short supply is to offer dual contracts — an arrangement that guarantees these teachers two or three months of employment with local businesses and industries during the summer. In addition to providing additional income, such contracts keep teachers, especially those in more technical fields, in laboratories and industries where they can remain abreast of current research and new technologies.

Option I — Provide Teachers

One way to alleviate teacher shortages or to augment local resources is to permit businesses and industries to bring their experts and specialists into the classroom at their expense. Atlantic Richfield, for example, sends one hundred of its employees into the inner city schools of Los Angeles to teach math and science courses.

Sixty percent of the nation's scientists and engineers — nearly 1.9 million people — are employed by the private sector. If just one-tenth of this resource became active in pre-college education, and on a very part-time basis, every school in the country would have access to two or three scientists or engineers.

Businesses should also consider underwriting the graduate fellowships of college graduates — who may not wish to become teachers — but would eagerly teach in order to continue their own studies.

Option J — Business-Run Teacher Institutes

Businesses should organize and run summer institutes for teachers. It is a relatively easy and cost-effective way of keeping teachers current. The Sun Oil Company, for example, sponsors annual seminars for science teachers. General Electric runs in-service programs to provide school staff in G.E. communities with knowledge about industrial careers and the impact of technology on the workplace.

Such programs are most effective when tailored to reflect local needs and resources and when the participants, through cooperating local colleges, earn graduate credit.

A variant of this program involves a partnership between the state and the business community. The state invests in updating the content of teacher-training courses and local industries, in turn, pay for the institutes and the curriculum materials.

Option K — Business Internships For Teachers

Businesses and industries should be hiring more teachers and guidance counselors during the summer months to provide them with full-time, first-hand learning experiences about employment opportunities and the skill requirements of local companies. In programs of this kind, participating companies pay teachers the equivalent of their school salaries. Teachers work in companies or in company operations which relate to their academic or vocational specialization.

In Milwaukee, Rexnord, a materials-handling engineering company, has hired more than 100 sixth through tenth grade teachers for five or six weeks each summer since 1976. The teachers are placed in productive middle management jobs which expose them to the business environment through real work assignments rather than "make work" or observation.

Similarly, Peoria's Caterpillar Tractor Company places 20 high school teachers in summer positions closely allied to their academic disciplines. Further north in Chicago, the Quaker Oats Company hires economics and business teachers at one of its food divisions and at its corporate headquarters.

Option L — Program Evaluation

One of the most valuable contributions businesses can make to the schools is to evaluate and provide counsel on current school programs and practices. In 1980, Chicago United, a consortium of businesses, created the Special Task Force on Education, which examined many aspects of Chicago's public schools, including the system's enormous business and administrative operation.

A Chicago United sub-committee studied vocational and career education. One aspect of its study involved a survey to assess the job readiness of high school graduates, to determine current and future job entry-level skills, to ascertain the adequacy of the

school curriculum to teach the skills and to determine how interested businesses could participate in the delivery of the schools' vocational training programs.

The data generated from this study identified the strengths and shortcomings of current vocational offerings and provided a basis for recommended improvements. The findings and suggestions are expected to help the Chicago schools develop programs better tailored to the needs of both students and Chicago's business community.

Option M — State Action and Planning

Economic development and public education are among the most important missions of state governments. Therefore, in developing viable school/business partnerships the state should play an active role — especially since Illinois, one of the nation's leading industrial and exporting states, is interested in creating conditions favorable to commercial growth.

The Governor's Office of Community and Economic Development, the State Board of Education and a statewide business-oriented organization — perhaps the Illinois Chamber of Commerce and Industry — should join forces to promote stronger school/business linkages. Such a consortium could do the following:

- Publish and widely distribute a catalog of the exemplary current school/business partnerships which exist in Illinois and other states.
- Examine existing statutes and administrative rules which may prevent needed and promising partnerships from developing and formulate, in consultation with other educational interests, recommendations for possible changes.
- Conduct regional seminars for business executives and school officials which focus on creating workable relationships, including procedures for planning, monitoring and evaluating programs and assessing local needs.
- Familiarize businesses and industries with existing tax provisions relating to the donation of equipment, personnel and other resources for the benefit of public schools.
- Establish several "technical teams" to help local businesses and schools negotiate compacts.
- Coordinate the school/business initiatives with local businesses and governments currently participating in the federally funded Job Partnership Training Act.

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